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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of:) Attorney Docket No.: F-189
Robert A. Cordery, et al.) Group Art Unit: 2731
Serial No.:) Examiner: S. Cangialosi
Filed:) Date: August 29, 2000
Title: SECURE USER CERTIFICATE FOR ELECTRONIC COMMERCE
EMPLOYING VALUE METERING SYSTEM

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

This Preliminary Amendment is being submitted concurrently with a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) request transmittal. Please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 1-34.

Add the following claims:

35. A method for validating a signed digital message, comprising the steps of: providing a register having funds stored therein; receiving a signed digital message from a sender; determining if sufficient funds are present in the register for validating the message; deducting funds from the register for validating the message; and validating the signed digital message using a public key of the sender.

36. The method of claim 35, comprising the further steps of: